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A
C R U S T

FOR THE

C R I T I C S.

INSCRIBED TO THE

Most Impertinent PUPPY on Earth.

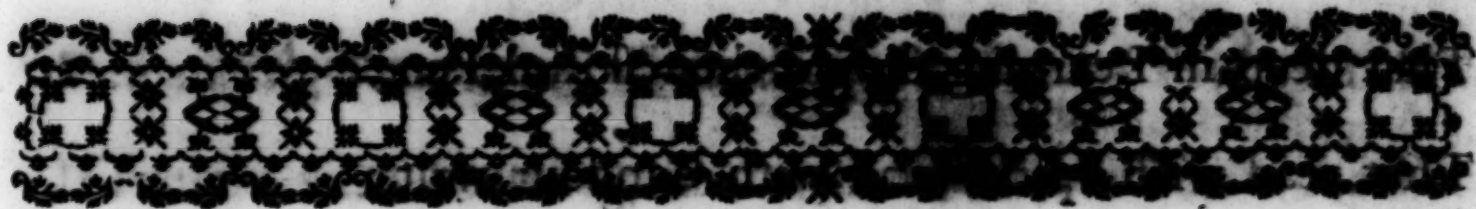
*How could these self-elected Monarchs raise
So large an Empire on so small a Base?
In what Retreat, inglorious and unknown,
Did Genius sleep, when Dulness seiz'd the Throne?*

CHURCHILL'S Apology.



L O N D O N:

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St. Paul's, 1762.



C R U S T

FOR THE C R I T I C S, &c.

WHEN Men for Glory, not for Lucre, writ,
 And Patronage was deem'd beneath a Wit;
 When POET was a great, a sacred Name,
 And Kings bequeath'd to Them their future Fame;
 The Emulous each rising Genius sung,
 No Jars, no Discords stopt their tuneful Tongue;
 Proud to excel, but when excell'd could bow,
 And twist their Laurel round a Rival's Brow.

Critics in those good Times were glorious Men,
 That deep in Learning dipp'd their skilful Pen ; 10
 That read with Spirit, and with Candour writ ;
 Nor poach'd for Slander, nor exploded Wit ;
 Nay, touch'd each Error with a tender Hand,
 That failing Genius might Respect command,
 But where the Beauties they exulting show'd, 15
 There, all their Learning, all their Genius glow'd,
 To wreath the Chaplet of immortal Fame,
 And while they gave, receiv'd the World's Acclaim.

OUR Critics edge the Poynard, steel the Dart,
 From Want of Learning how to judge each Art ; 20
 Conceal'd, like Ruffians, aim the missive Blow,
 And treach'rous lay exalted Genius low.

SEE there th' illib'ral Pack perverting Rules,
 To make ingenuous Wit the Scoff of Fools ;

Mark how they ~~confuse~~ and degrade the Lays, 25
 Demanding Patronage, demanding Praise:
 If fraught with Learning, and with nervous Sense,
 The Harshness of each Period gives Offence;
 But if with Harmony the Numbers roll'd,
 Be sure they're heavy, sleepy, dull and cold. 30
 Let but a Nuptial Lay of SCOTTS appear,
 With Pow'rs to captivate the Heart and Ear,
 Wild as a Lunatic they swell and rage,
 And stab and torture his melodious Page.

TIME, Toil, and Property, in vain you plead, 35
 And for your mangled Offspring itly bleed;
 Should you from fond parental Love complain,
 And daring vindicate the murder'd Strain,
 Death, Hell, and Furies! how the Bravoes rise!
 To blast your Honour with atrocious Lies. 40

HENCE Works of Genius, writ with Fire and Taste,
 With Depth of Learning, depth of Judgment grac'd,
 Will not with Fame the Author's Hopes avail,
 While Spight and Dulness o'er the Press prevail.

40 Ah! weep, ye Learned! weep, alas! to see 45
 Each Art enslav'd, and no one Science free;
 No Wit exempt from their devouring Rage,
 Nor Virtue, Merit, Beauty, Rank, nor Age,
 Nor can the mighty Dead remain at Peace;
 Their Tombs they ransack, and their Writings fleece; 50
 For all their Learning as their own they wear,
 And from their Ashes ev'n their Frailties tear,
 The noblest Names to blot with lasting Scorn,
 And furnish Lyes to Villains yet unborn.

50 O CEASE this Warfare! and let Genius shine 55
 Untouch'd, unslander'd by your pois'nous Line;

Which like an Asp's injected Venom flows,
And o'er the wounded Page a deadly Blackness throws.

THE other Tribe when they Reviews began,
Let Truth and Candour mark their novel Plan,
Nor damn'd the Author, nor abus'd the Man.

} 60

BUT you, great Critics, with infidious Aim,
Combin'd to plunder ev'ry Work of Fame,
To vest all Merit in your Royal Selves,
And treat Mankind as puny Dwarfs and Elves.

65

WHAT vast Applause adorns the Critic Muse,
So sweetly temper'd in his own Reviews !
What loud Elogiums hail the Historian's Page
Of nervous Nonsense, fraught with Party Rage !
Of ill drawn Monsters, poor mishapen Things,
Impos'd on Fools for Heroes, Queens and Kings.

70

But

But Time, which ripens ev'ry great Design,
 At length on him may more propitious shine;
 Digest that Lumber, which distracts his Brain,
 And purge from Falsehood ev'ry injur'd Reign. 75

O SAY what work of his demands Acclaim
 To fill that empty Bladder----What?----His Fame.
 Once puff'd with Tinsel, and inflated Wit,
 Bombastic Prose, and sinking Verse he writ.
 To paint distorted Nature's hideous Mein, 80
 His Envy tickled, and malignant Spleen;
 From hence his Novels shock the modest Ear,
 And like *Batavian* Pictures spoilt appear
 With Tars and Boors, the lowest Dregs of Earth,
 Too mean for Censure, and too vile for Mirth. 85

BOASTFUL and proud he trod the Stage of Life,
 Embroil'd in Fends of dull unletter'd Strife;

Till

(II.)

Till soaring on unequal Wings to Fame,
He pond'rous dropt into the Vale of Shame ;
Where, fortify'd in his own Filth, he lies, 90
Like vile DOMITIAN, tort'ring harmless Flies.

HE'D better far pursue his former Art,
Scalp, slash, and slay, with dauntless Hand and Heart ;
For some, adapted to the murd'ring Trade,
Can thro' warm Flesh and Blood delighted wade. 95

THE Critic Muse, whose ever restless Mind,
From Envy damns the Works of half Mankind ;
Besieg'd by Duns, by Bailiffs and their Crew,
Once from AUGUSTA just in Time withdrew ;
He skim'd the Turnpike, and the flow'ry Meed, 100
With watchful Eye, and with becoming Speed :
Nor did bold BERNARD swifter urge his Way,
While CURL in Plash of his CORINNA lay :

But safe arriv'd in that Commercial Town,
Where scribbling Garreteer was never known; 105

He ap'd the Gentleman with Lordly Air,
Turn'd his *Parnassian* Coat, and curl'd his Hair:

But wanting Cash, he rack'd his reptile Brain

The Silver Tribute of the Rich to gain,

And after weighing ev'ry specious Thought, 110

For printing Poems he Proposals wrote;

With these he visited each public Place

With bland Assurance, for he lack'd no Face;

Nay, shew'd Credentials of his tuneful Ear,

Sublimely written by a singing Peer; 115

Boasted of Patronage, the Smile of Lords,

Their *Claret*, *Burgundy*, and splendid Boards;

But with Self-dignity his Vaunts to end,

To Lords prefer'd ev'n Poster and a Friend.

Then cringing begg'd they'd half Subscriptions pay, 120

For Print and Paper, which he must defray.

He!

He !----lucky Cur !----thus pick'd up many a Crown ;
 Liv'd Months in Clover, and rid back to Town :
 But as the promis'd Volume ne'er came out,
 Some tax his Honour, some his Genius doubt ; 125
 Methinks they rather should applaud the Wit
 That lives by Poetry he never writ.

THESE tasteless Critics, lost to all Regard,
 Despis'd shall scribble for corrupt Reward.
 Unheeded puff their Fustian thro' the Town, 130
 And yelp and bark at COLMAN's just Renown.
 At tuneful LLOYD the snarling Puppies sprung ;
 But while they yowl'd, ye Gods ! how sweet he sung !
 Lo ! CHURCHILL comes, with his victorious Lance,
 Like many a Hero fam'd in old Romance, 135
 From Violation saves his Captive Muse,
 And Gibbets ev'ry Giant of Reviews.

But

But Hackney Writers, Men of wond'rous Skill,
 With feeble Doctors, who but Authors kill;
 With *King's-Bench*, *Fleet*, and *Grub-Street*'s swarming Brood;
 A hasty, needy, noisy Brotherhood;
 Make shining Critics, and from hence Reviews
 Are clear of Slander, as of Vice the Stews.
 Slander !---- absolve them of that dire Offence;
 For Learning, Candour, Decency and Sense, 145
 Adorn whate'er they scribble or they scrawl,
 As free from Malice, as from Wormwood Gall.

But tell me, Critics, if you dare confess,
 Why you invade, and thus excise the Press?
 The Roads to Fame, like other Roads, are free, 150
 Open to all, to him, to you, to me.
 Say, on what Title do you found this Right?
 Can your Banditti only judge and write?

Allow'd

Allow'd indeed they've got *Stentorian* Lungs;

Amazing Insolence ! obnoxious Tongues.

But if these Gifts are not the same requir'd

To rule o'er Learning, and the Train inspir'd,

155

No more presume to take the Critic's Chair,

And dictate Nonsense with imperial Air.

At length Mankind thro' your Designs have seen,

Your venal Dulness, and vindictive Spleen ;

Convinc'd that Hirelings may on Fools impose,

160

And pass for Merit's Friends, tho' Merit's Foes ;

With generous Indignation they despise

Your paltry, flimsy, filthy Book of Lyes,

And favour ev'ry Work you stigmatize.

F I N I S

